



## SPECIES

Photos: F. C. Robiller, *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*/CC BY-SA

# Lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*)

Information: Hilary Bond

### All about the lesser horseshoe bat

- This bat is one of the smallest in the UK (roughly the size of a plum).
- Like the greater horseshoe bat, it is so called because of the horseshoe shaped nose leaf which is part of its echolocation system. The echolocation call of lesser/greater horseshoe bats is very distinctive: constant frequency with a frequency modulated component at the start and end.
- At rest, the bats hang with their wings wrapped around their bodies.
- Lesser horseshoe bats feed among vegetation in sheltered lowland valleys. They fly quite low and often take prey from branches. They feed on small insects and spiders.
- Like greater horseshoe bats the breeding females will use buildings with open roof spaces. However in winter they will hibernate in groups in caves, disused mines or cellars.

**DID YOU KNOW?** The lesser horseshoe bat can be found as far away as North Africa!

### Learn more

- [adlib.eversysite.co.uk/adlib/defra/content.aspx?doc=4247&id=4255](http://adlib.eversysite.co.uk/adlib/defra/content.aspx?doc=4247&id=4255)
- [cdn.bats.org.uk/uploads/pdf/Species-info-sheet-for-lesser-horseshoe-bat-FINAL.pdf?v=1642079702](http://cdn.bats.org.uk/uploads/pdf/Species-info-sheet-for-lesser-horseshoe-bat-FINAL.pdf?v=1642079702)



## SPECIES

Photos: 01234lukeorom/CC BY-SA 4.0., Remus86

# Greater horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*)

Information: Hilary Bond

### All about the greater horseshoe bat

- This bat is one of the biggest in the UK (roughly the size of a pear).
- Like the lesser horseshoe bat, it is so called because of the horseshoe shaped nose leaf which is part of its echolocation system. The echolocation call of lesser/greater horseshoe bats is very distinctive: constant frequency with a frequency modulated component at the start and end.
- Like lesser horseshoe bats, in the summer, the breeding females will use buildings with open roof spaces, which warm quickly in the sunshine.
- In winter, male greater horseshoe bats will hibernate in groups in caves, disused mines, cellars or tunnels while, in contrast to the lesser horseshoe bat, females often hibernate alone.
- The greater horseshoe bat is now only found in the southwest of England and in Wales. It is a protected species and although it is only listed as of "Least Concern" on the IUCN Red List, numbers are thought to be dropping.

**DID YOU KNOW?** The greater horseshoe bat's hibernation site can be up to 50 km from their breeding roost, and the bats can live for up to 30 years!

### Learn more

- [cdn.bats.org.uk/uploads/pdf/Species-info-sheet-for-greater-horseshoe-bat-FINAL.pdf?v=1642079719](https://cdn.bats.org.uk/uploads/pdf/Species-info-sheet-for-greater-horseshoe-bat-FINAL.pdf?v=1642079719)
- [ptes.org/get-informed/facts-figures/greater-horseshoe-bat/](https://ptes.org/get-informed/facts-figures/greater-horseshoe-bat/)
- [wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-explorer/mammals/greater-horseshoe-bat/](https://wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-explorer/mammals/greater-horseshoe-bat/)

## Why do lesser and greater horseshoe bats need our help?

The disturbance of roosts, lack of foraging habitats and the loss of permanent pasture are bigger issues than most of us are able to address, but if you have a roost nearby already, there are things that you can do to help maintain the health of that population.

## How can we help?

- Leave entrance holes used by the bats clear of obstructions.
- Check for bats if you are renovating an old building, and if you find any, undertake a bat survey.
- Preserve unbroken tree and hedge lines, planting more if necessary, as the bats use these to help them navigate as well as providing feeding perches from which they will hunt.
- Plant flowers which attract insects like moths that bats like to eat.
- Avoid using pesticides and insecticides.
- Cattle should be wormed during winter housing. Lesser/greater horseshoe bats predominantly feed on dung fauna and can be harmed by the presence of worming products in the dung.

## How do I monitor and record?

- Without a licence, it is illegal to disturb roosting bats and therefore the easiest way to monitor numbers is by using a bat detector at dusk or dawn outside the entrance of the roost. The best months to observe bat movement are through spring and summer.
- Enter records into iRecord.

## Learn more

- The Bat Conservation Trust [bats.org.uk](https://bats.org.uk)
- Contact an A Rocha UK naturalist at [naturalist@arocha.org](mailto:naturalist@arocha.org)